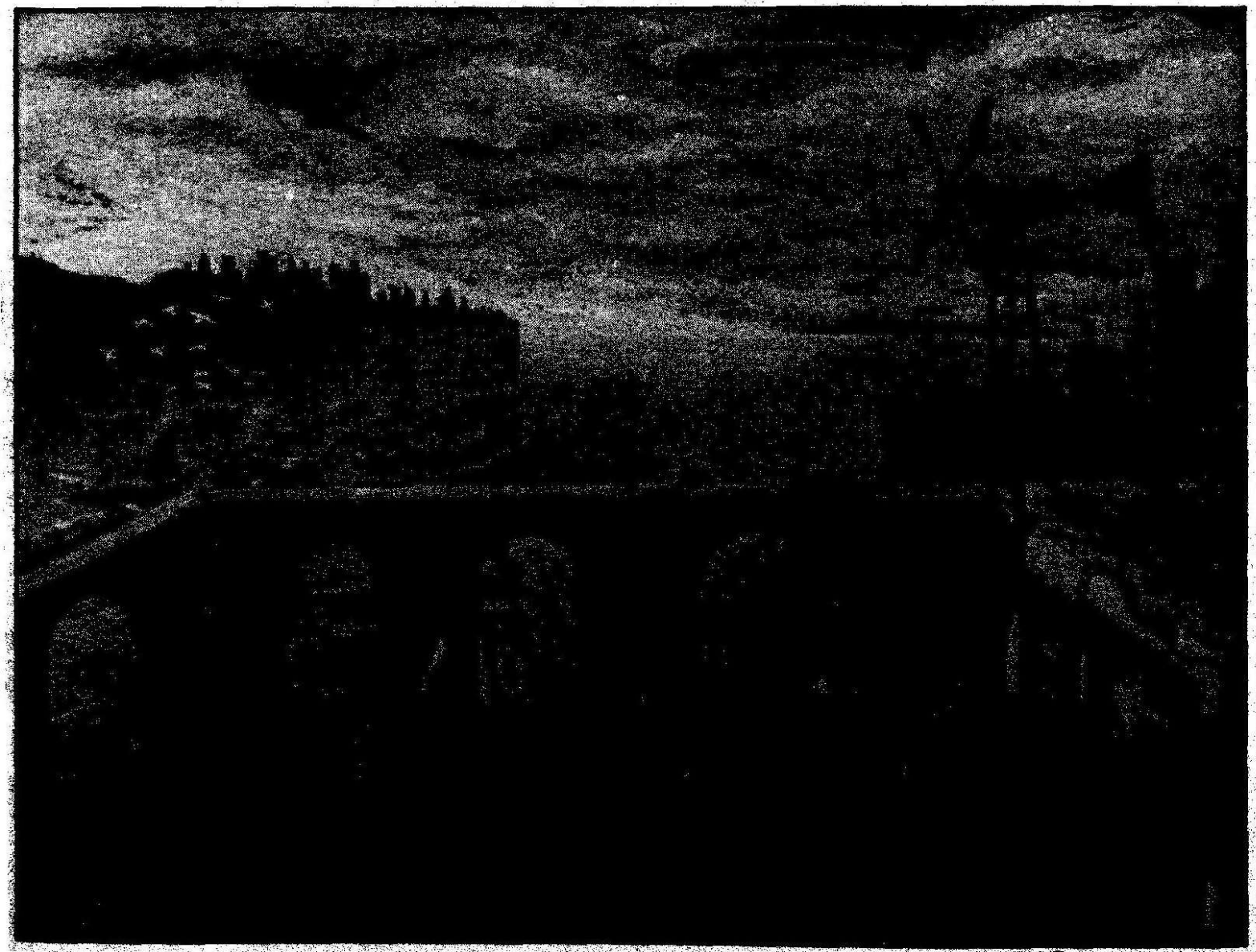
THE BI-MONTHLY

Newsletter of the Bisexual Center

Volume 6 Number 3 May-June 1982



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The futuristic painting by Bary McInerney on the cover of this issue represents one form of bisexual life style, a family of three people living their lives, raising children, watering the garden, in the "front" yard of their rooftop house, as whales, birds, and aircraft pass by.

"THE BI BOOK"

There is a great need for more information about bisexuality, for our communities and for others who don't yet know about our lives. The media is finally approaching us. The Donahue Show, The Today Show, "What's Up America?" and Cosmo Magazine all want to explore and exploit us. We ourselves must get good information out there; no one else will do it righteously. My fantasy has been to help create and publish "The Bi Book," a collection of bisexual writings from many people. Starting in May, three of us, David Lourea, Margo Rila, and I, all of us involved in the Bi Center from the beginning, will begin this project, with the help of other bi friends as well.

"The Bi Book" will contain articles, fiction, fantasy, poetry, graphics; many bi voices declaraing our reality. Creative output from the Bi Center and other sources will provide, hopefully, a full range of information. Help us with your ideas and energy.

-- Maggi Rubenstein

THE BISEXUAL CENTER

P.O. Box 26227 (415) 929-9299
San Francisco, CA 94126

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this issue:

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NEW MOVIES

By Jim Barnes

"Making Love," a movie about a young husband's struggle to come to terms with his homosexuality, and the impact that struggle has on his marriage, has been so thoroughly discussed in the mass media by now that a detailed description of the plot, and the implications the distribution of the movie have for the public perception of the gay lifestyle, are probably unnecessary. (There is an especially perceptive review of the movie by David Ansen in the March 1 issue of Newsweek magazine, which might be of interest to readers who don't particularly want to see the movie.

For readers of the Bi-Monthly, the most disappointing aspect of "Making Love" will be the way in which the possibility of a bisexual resolution to the husband's dilemma is quickly and firmly ruled out. Most of the first half of the movie is taken up by scenes which show that Zack and Clare have a genuinely happy and loving marriage, and that Zack clearly desires, as well as loves, his wife -- he's not just using her as an "alibi" for his gay feelings. Yet, after beginning to accept these feelings consciously, and having several gay experiences, he is convinced that he has to end their relationship completely. After her first horrified reaction to Zack's disclosure of his new sexual orientation, Clare is willing to try to work out some kind of arrangement to keep their marriage alive; it's Zack who refuses to, as he puts it, "live a double life." He also says that she deserves a "full sexual life," the implication being that he is going to be unable to meet her sexual needs (the movie had presented one earlier scene which implies that Zack is losing, or has lost, his sexual interest in her).

All of Zack's emotional and psychological development takes place "offstage," and we get only occasional reports on how he's feeling. The result is that we have to take the scriptwriter's word for it that Zack really is in touch with his own needs, when he announces to Clare that the break has to be complete and final. It's quite possible that a "real-life" Zack and Clare would come to the same conclusion, but the failure to present the emotional dynamics behind this process has the effect of distancing us from the characters, and the failure to explore, even briefly, any alternatives to the ending of their relationship tends to reinforce the stereotype of mutually exclusive hetero- and homosexuality. "Making Love" can be seen as a step backward, in that sense.

However, the presentation of gay people as sympathetic, or at least ordinary, human beings is a vast improvement over the distorted images of the recent movies "Cruising" and "Windows," and the film deserves support on that basis, at least.

Audience reaction to movies with gay-related themes is often as interesting as the films themselves -- remember the gasp from theatre audiences at the male-male kissing scene in the British movie "Sunday, Bloody Sunday?" When I saw "Making Love" in a crowded theatre near the University of California, in Berkeley, the only audible comment at the rather chaste smooch exchanged by Zack and his male lover was a faint "Yuck!" from somebody's girlfriend three rows down.

However, reports of more hostile audience reactions have been received. One of the most savage -- also at a theatre in supposedly enlightened Berkeley -- was in response to scenes in another movie dealing with the "coming-out" process: "A Woman Like Eve," which, because it deals with lesbian relationships, may have inflamed some sensitive male egos. This movie is about a depressed housewife who becomes involved with a lesbian commune in the south of France, and falls in love with one of its members, Lilliane, played by Maria Schneider, who co-starred with Marlon Brando in "Last Tango in Paris," and who has made public her own bisexuality (according to media interviews, her co-star in "A Woman Like Eve," Monique van de Ven, as well as all of the principal characters in "Making Love" are exclusively heterosexual).

"Personal Best," about two young women, track athletes who become friends and lovers as well as competitors, is primarily about the pursuit of excellence rather than about sexuality, although the relationship between the women -- one of whom also has a relationship with young man -- plays a central role.

"A Woman Like Eve" and "Personal Best" have both received good reviews, and the second of these two movies has been especially highly praised. Readers are invited to contribute their impressions of, and responses to, these two movies, as well as "Making Love," to the Bi-Monthly.

"BI CENTER AT THE LESBIAN/GAY PARADE (1981)" Drawing by John Clay

LESBIAN/GAY FREEDOM DAY PARADE

JUNE 27TH

Every year one of our biggest and most exciting activities is participating in the Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Parade. This year will be no different.

On Sunday, June 27 Market Street is the place to be, whether to take a stand against the new rise of homophobia from the "Moral Majority", to celebrate our sexuality and unity with our sisters and brothers, or just to soak up the sun and enjoy San Francisco's largest community event.

Meet at the Bi Center at 9 a.m. to travel together to the beginning of the parade. Bring banners, balloons, placards, streamers, etc. to help create a joyous and conspicuous presence.

Also, look for our booth at the Civic Center -- stop by and say hello, or, better yet, volunteer to staff the table for an hour. (It's lots of fun and you get to meet lots of people.)

After the parade, join us at the now-traditional wind-down party at the Center at 5 p.m.

If you'd like to help put together our float, call the Bi Center and leave a message for John Clay, with your phone number or some other way to contact you.

PRE-PARADE SOCIAL

The Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Committee has prepared a slide show of past parades which will be shown at the Bisexual Center Friday, June 4. In addition to the slide show, we will regale each other with exotic parade tales! Parade T-shirts (great to wear before the parade!) buttons and posters will be available, as well as Bi Center T-shirts (great to wear to the parade!). This is a good time to volunteer to work on the float, or at the booth, or to be a monitor.

Later...dancing? Out to the bars? A late movie?

Everyone in the Bi Center and SFSI communities is invited for a relaxed and social evening. Beer and juice will be provided. Bring munchies.

Date: Friday, June 4
Time: 8 p.m.
Donation: $1 (can't beat it!)

MONITORS NEEDED

...for parade. It's the only way to get the spiffy monitor T-shirt and it's fun. It's also an important contribution to the community. Attendance at two short training sessions and a committment to work all day is required. Please call the parade office at 861-5404 or Neil Fullagar at 929-1678.

T-SHIRTS

There's still time to get an official Bi Center T-Shirt before the Parade! They come in red-on-white and brown-on-tan, and carry the Bi Center logo and name. We're asking $7.00 per shirt (add $1.00 for mailing). The proceeds help to support the Center.

FOURTH-OF-JULY CAMPING TRIP

This year will mark our third annual camping trip to the Russian River. It has proved to be one of our most exciting, liberating, and joyous events of the year. Coming on the heels of the Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Parade (June 27th), the strength and unity gained from the march become multiplied during the three days we spend together. Our favorite quote about the camping trip comes from Lloyd Cook, who drove down from Victoria (British Columbia) two years ago:

> "... an amazing collection of powerful individual personalities banded together around a campfire. An emerging people. ..."

We are grateful to John and Vernie Fuller, the owners of the Schoolhouse Canyon Campground, for reserving a large area for us this year. We will be there Friday through Sunday, July 2, 3 and 4. This is a members-only event and the space is limited, so it is important to get reservations in early. The cost is $10.00 per person per night. Call the Bi Center at 929-9299 for carpooling directions.

To reserve a space, send $10.00 per person to the Center by June 28th, specifying the days you want, and whether you can provide transportation, or need it yourself.

Letter to PLEXUS

This is the text of a letter to the newspaper Plexus from some of the women of the Bi Center's Women's Rap Group, sent April, 1982.

We're a group from the Bisexual Center Women's Rap. Our rap group has become a wonderful, supportive environment -- for most of us, one of the few places where we can explore and discuss who we are and want to be, what we face as women whose sexuality isn't simply "straight" or "gay."

If you're unaware that bisexual women exist in the "women's community": we're here, we're involved, we care -- as do many kinds of women not always included undr the euphemism "women's community."

We are straight women now exploring our feelings for women, women already bisexual for some time, and lesbians now exploring our heterosexual feelings. We'd like to see the diversity of woman accepted and celebrated in the women's community as well -- regarding sexuality or whatever else separates us. We write not to trash but to educate our sisters about the stereotypes and attitudes we face.

Among the "myth-understandings" we encounter are that bisexual women:

- "are promiscuous; can't have serious relationships, don't respect those of others"
- "can't make up their minds, should get off the fence"
- "are just lesbians afraid to come out"
- "don't take relationships with women seriously -- they'll take women's energy then sell you out for a man"
- "don't have to face gay oppression."

Some women may act in ways that promote these sterotypes -- but these stereotypes don't at all reflect the bisexual women we know.

A spectrum of relationship styles exists regardless of sexual orientation. Many of us will be in different situations at different times in our lives. If we can love either, why must we commit ourselves to loving only men or only women?

We know how it can hurt when a woman leaves you for a man -- it happens to us, too. But we also know our relationships with women are important to us. We don't like it *when anyone* -- *lesbian or straight* -- trivializes them.

We believe in relationships in which freely giving our energy generates more energy in return. We want to give our energy to people who support and care about us -- regardless of their gender. We do not -- indeed, cannot -- ignore our oppression under patriarchy. We refuse to be blamed for "collaboration" for loving individual men. Despite what many women would like to believe, not all women are wonderful and not all men are terrible.

Coming out bi when you've been a lesbian is no easy cop-out. You can feel guilt and confusion over emerging heterosexual feelings. You can be bisexual without compromising your lesbian feminist values, but you cannot be sure the lesbian community will trust or support you. Formerly lesbian bisexuals usually cherish their lesbian friends and their involvement in the lesbian community, and can realistically fear coming out of the bisexual closet. It can cost you your lesbian friends -- and that hurts.

Meanwhile, bisexuality doesn't exempt us from heterosexist oppression. In terms of homophobia on the job, in our families and among our friends, there is often little difference between bisexuality and exclusive lesbianism. That we have heterosexual relationships doesn't mean we're thrilled with the straight community -- into which we fit only marginally. Sometimes we do choose to remain silent about loving women. Coming out isn't always a safe thing to do. But we often take advantage of being in straight environments to speak up for lesbians.

Perhaps the obstacle to mutual understanding is that the complexities of human relationships don't always fit neatly into political models.

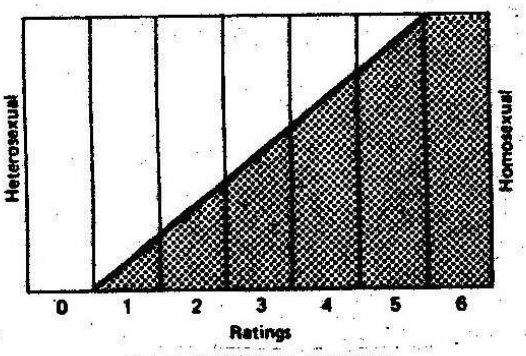
Whatever our backgrounds, we're all part of the women's community, which means a great deal to us. We're concerned when we feel excluded. To those, especially in the lesbian community, who've trashed your sisters for being bisexual: HOW DARE YOU! Have you forgotten what it's like to be ostracized and excluded for your sexual preference?

If you'd like information on our rap group, or would like these issues discussed in a public forum, call the Bisexual Center at 929-9299.

Thanks for listening. We'd love to hear from you.

Love,

SOME OF THE WOMEN OF THE BISEXUAL CENTER WOMEN'S RAP GROUP



THE KINSEY SCALE

ODE TO THE KINSEY SCALE

My love for women is deep and enduring,
My love for men is tempestuous and
exciting.
My feelings go from zero to six
in a matter of seconds --
Dear Kinsey, where exactly do I fit in?
Your scale won't stay still for me
Or I can't stay still for it,
But I need a resting place!
The man I love makes me feel sixish
much of the time, and
The women I love make me feel
more like a four, and
Sometimes it balances out to a three --
Dear Kinsey, is there hope for me?

-- by Rene' Dutton-Turner

The ART CORNER

by

Bary McInerney

"I've always wanted to paint pictures, but..." Here are some easy steps to get going.

1. Pick a comfortable place to work that you can leave your supplies out so they are always ready to use. If it takes 15 to 20 minutes to drag all the stuff out and set it up, the inspiration to paint may disappear before you start.
2. Good light is essential.
3. Look at how-to-paint books. The cheap ones with the most pictures are the best deal.
4. Use the supply guide from your book to get started.
5. Make yourself as comfortable as possible so you'll want to stay there and paint.

Rene' Turner's work in the last group show is a good example of imagination and sexual images. She shows how colored pencils and paper can be used to make personal statements about sex and art. Are those mushrooms, or penises? Where is the right hand or the cigarette-smoking cat in the sport jacket? The lack of pubic hair puts another twist to a seemingly normal torso. Rene risks approval in favor of imagery.

This column is available for any art-related items.

PLEXUS BI ISSUE

We've been informed that the next issue of Plexus will focus on bisexuality. Their deadline is May 8th for submission of articles for that issue, so it may be a little late for our readers to get their ideas and articles in for publication (send them to the Bi-Monthly instead!). However, their address is 545 Athol Avenue, Oakland, California 94606. Watch for that issue, and let us know how you feel about its content.

BI SOCIETY PAGE

ROARING TWENTIES PARTY

Put on your zoot suit or flapper dress and make your way to the Starlight Room for an evening or dancing the night away. Members only. Bring your own hip flask!

Date: Saturday, June 19
Time: 9 p.m.
Place: The Bi Center
Donation: $3.00

YOU OUGHTA BE IN PICTURES

There has never been a movie about bisexual people and the life of our community. You can help change that! The Bi Center and producer Sandy Mulholland are making a documentary film about preparation for and participation in this year's Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Parade. Filming has already begun.

To become a part of this project, you can either appear in the film, and/or become a sponsor, by contributing part of the $3,000.00 that will be needed to complete this unique movie. Contact Sandy (c/o the Bi Center) for more information.

Filming of pre-parade events will always be with the consent of those present. On the day of the parade, however, everyone from ABC TV to my Aunt Gertrude will be taking pictures -- so smile!

PATTERNS OF PREFERENCE

Infants are born without sexual preferences. A baby girl does not exclusively prefer males, nor a baby boy, females. They respond with pleasure and affection to anybody who treats them well. Until babies learn through sad experience to fear persons or things, they actually like everyone and everything.

If reared in a family where love and kindness are the rule, the young child will shower its love on all persons, regardless of sex. It knows no inhibitions, and will touch and explore any part of its own body or those around it. The toddler, long since weaned, will still try to reach for its mother's breast because it feels good. The baby will also explore its father's body, for at this age the sex of the parent means nothing.

By the time of entering first grade, however, the child knows that all of humankind is split into two extremely different halves, male and female. Children, contrary to most parents' beliefs, are intensely curious about sex. They might be just as curious about hamburgers and french fries if they had never seen or tasted them, yet they suspected their existence through smirking references and incomprehensible jokes -- especially if questions brought only evasive answers or even reprimands. Nothing shines a brighter spotlight on something hidden than to call it wicked and taboo. Aside from parental mystification of the subject, however, children do have a natural interest in their bodies and their sexuality ... they are naturally sexual, which I call naturosexual.

But with boys and girls trained from infancy into separate sexual stereotypes (guns and trucks, dolls and dishes), the two sexes learn to play and develop apart. As the sexes grow up with ever diverging goals, males and females become unfathomable mysteries to each other. Men often say "I don't understand women!" and women find men equally incomprehensible. Neither sex experiences this degree of bafflement with members of their own sex, however. In each sex there also seems to exist an unspoken, almost unconscious, allegiance that surfaces on occasion against the other sex in general, regardless of an individual's feelings for a particular member of the other sex.

Excerpted from Fantasies Can Set You Free, by Stan Dale. Copyright 1980 by Stan Dale. Used by permission.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Advertising space in the Bi-Monthly is available to members of the Bisexual Center. Reproductions of business cards cost $5.00; other ads cost $1.00/line (sorry, no "personal" ads).

CANDID PHOTOGRAPHY

Black & White Portraits
By
Bary McInerney
P.O. Box 361
Point Richmond, CA 94807
Phone 415-237-2561

Dan Eisenberg, a Bi Center member, is looking for a place to stay (room or apartment) for part or all of the summer, preferably in San Francisco and with good public transportation. He can supply references, and can be reached at 1507 Sharon Road, Tallahassee, Florida 32303, telephone (904) 385-4248.

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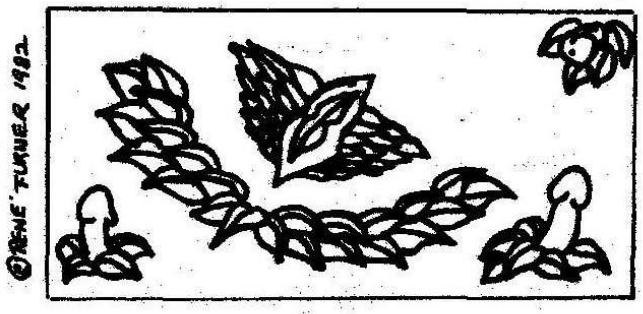

FORGOTTEN PEARLS OF WISDOM

(from Sigmund Freud's Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality (Vol. V, p. 347)

It is well known that at all times there have been, as there are, human beings who can take as their sexual objects persons of either sex without the one trend interfering with the other. We call these people bisexuals. . . . But we have come to know that all human beings are bisexual in this sense; either in the manifest or latent form.

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Community Bulletin Board

BOARD MEETINGS

The next two meetings of the Board of Directors of the Bisexual Center will be held on Monday, May 10 and Monday, June 14 at 7:30 pm., at the Bi Center. Meetings of the Board of Directors are open to members who would like to share ideas and suggestions or just want to see how the Bi Center is run.

TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY NIGHT RAP GROUPS

The Bi Center has drop-in rap groups on Tuesday and Wednesday nights, open to all interested people. The rap groups are a good way to find out what the Center offers and to exchange ideas on sexuality, relationships and other subjects. They start at 7:30 p.m. and run until 10:00 p.m. Please be on time. We ask for a $3.00 donation to help support the work of the Center.

MARIN-SONOMA FOLKS!!

A bisexual rap group is forming in Marin. If you are interested, leave a message on the Bi Center phone tape (929-9299) for Mary Louise. Looking forward to meeting you!

WOMEN'S RAP GROUP

The ongoing Women's Group meets at the Bi Center on the first and third Monday of each month, at 7:30 p.m. It is open to all interested women. We ask for a $3.00 donation.

WOMEN ONLY

Come celebrate the first anniversary of the Women's Rap Group at a dance party at the Bisexual Center. Members only. Bring munchies!!

Date: Friday, May 14
Time: 9 p.m.
Place: The Bi Center
Donation: $2.00

NEWSLETTER

Your articles, letters, and graphics are needed for the Bi-Monthly. All contributions must be in by the start of the layout session to be considered for the next issue of the newsletter. Schedule for the next issue:

LAYOUT: Sunday, June 13, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
PASTEUP: Sunday, June 20, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

We urgently need help in typing, setting up titles, cutting and pasting, and other jobs. No prior experience is required.

ITALIAN POT LUCK

It's time for all you creative chefs out there to get out your pots and pans and pasta makers and bring your favorite Italian dish to our potluck. Members only.

Date: Saturday, May 22
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: The Bi Center
Donation: $2.00

A BRAINSTORMING GET-TOGETHER

An opportunity to share fantasies, to get feedback on planning and to cruise for potential co-actualizers of your fantasy. Fantasies will be limited to constructive social and political projects and activities for the development of the bi-identified community including both official Bi Center functions and independent events in the community. An excellent time for new members to connect with activities and projects in process.

Date: Monday, May 24
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: The Bi Center

If you're interested in helping pull this off or want more information, leave your name and phone number for Carol via the Bi Center (929-9299).

BI-MONTHLY CALENDAR 1982

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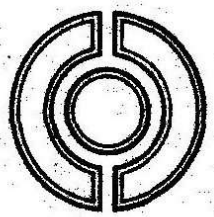

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